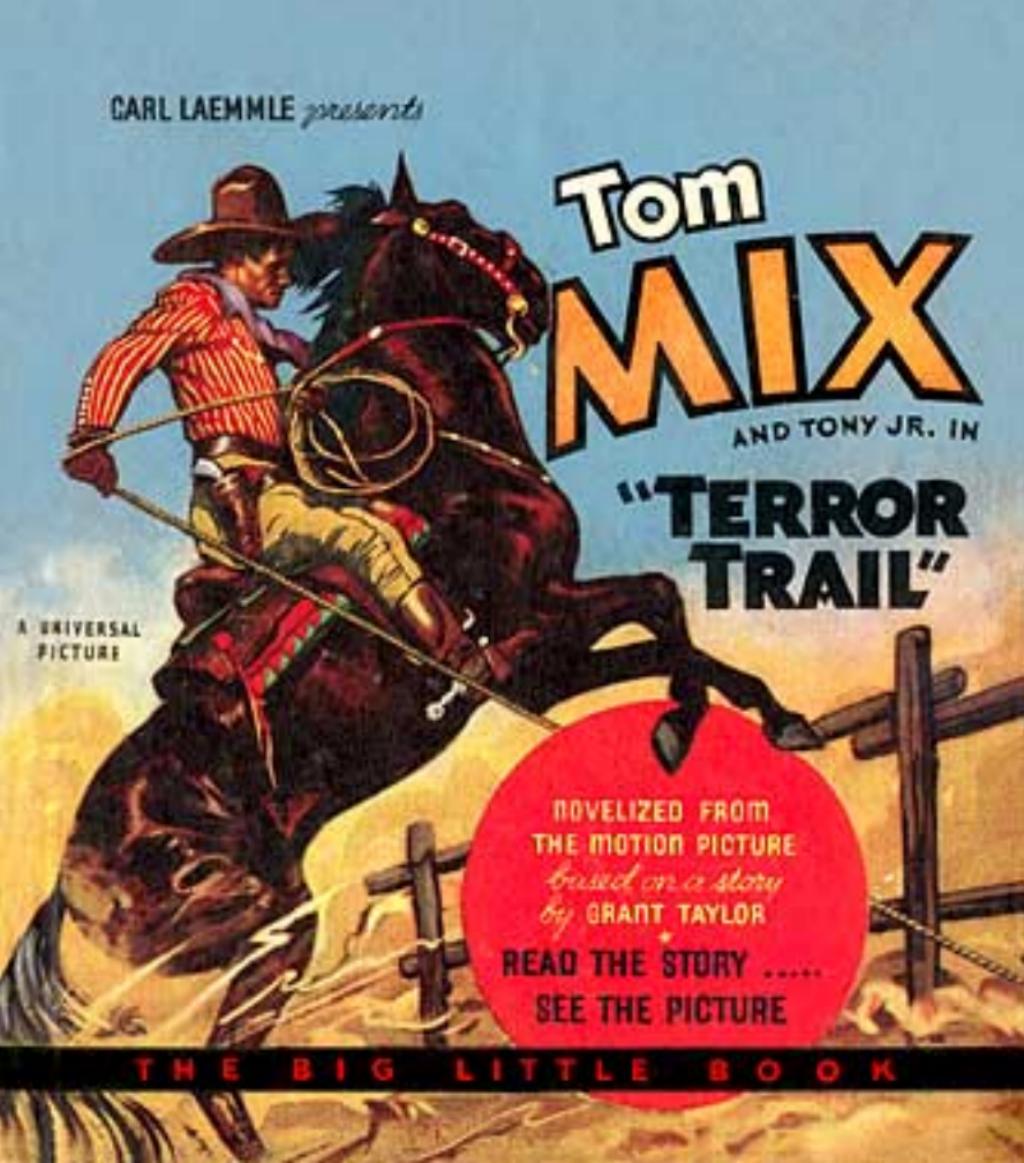


CARL LAEMMLE presents

A dynamic illustration of cowboy Tom Mix riding a dark horse at a gallop. He wears a wide-brimmed hat and a red and white striped shirt. He is holding a lasso in his right hand and a rifle in his left. The horse is rearing slightly, kicking up dust. In the background, there's a wooden fence and a setting sun.

Tom
MIX

AND TONY JR. IN

"TERROR
TRAIL"

A UNIVERSAL
PICTURE

NOVELIZED FROM
THE MOTION PICTURE
Based on a story
by GRANT TAYLOR

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THE BIG LITTLE BOOK

C A R L L A E M M L E *P r e s e n t s*

T O M M I X
and T O N Y J r .

i n

Terror Trail

Novelized from the motion picture
based on a story by
GRANT TAYLOR

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The Coach Careened Wildly around a Curve

CHAPTER I THE HOLD UP

The rattle of rifle fire split the air and re-echoed down the mountain pass. There were shouts, screams and a clatter of hoofs on the hard road as the four horse stage coach careened wildly around the curve of the road.

The horses were in panic. A wheel shattered against the boulder with a splintering sound as the coach lunged to one side.

The driver pitched forward across the foot-board, blood streaming from a wound in the back of his head. The guard steadied himself against the hand rail. His gun leveled as he aimed to shoot at one of the oncoming desper-

adoes. Before he could pull the trigger however, a bullet hit him and he slid forward. He caught himself momentarily and hung desperately to the rail.

Then the other front wheel came off. The vehicle lunged into the ground. The horses tore along for a few more yards and then came to a stop.

The guard dropped off into the road and rolled on his face. The door was forced open and panic stricken passengers alighted, not daring to await the onslaught of the outlaws.

It was not long. A group of six desperadoes, led by the notorious McPherson brothers, Tad and Tim, came tearing in full gallop up the road toward them. They made short work of the hold up. Mail sacks were looted. The pas-



A Group of Desperadoes

sengers were stripped of money and valuables.

With barely a glance at the two men lying in the road, the bandit band was astride their horses again and headed for the mountain fastnesses.

The band tore along to its secret hiding place. Their pinto ponies were steaming wet from the hard ride as they pulled into camp. In a jiffy the men were off their backs. Other horses awaited them—horses markedly different from the pintos—bays, roans and blacks. They were all bridled and saddled.

“Little Casino,” a young man whose real name was Berny Ladd, had seen to that.

Little Casino was new to the gang. He had yet to learn their rough and ready ways. He trembled in excitement as the gang poured in.



The Panic-stricken Passengers Alighted

The men were shouting as they mounted the new horses.

"What did you plug that driver for?" growled one man jokingly.

"He made a face at me!" chuckled Tad McPherson.

Little Casino's face blanched.

"Did you kill somebody?" he ventured.

"Is that some of your business?" Tad growled at the frightened youngster.

Tim McPherson, the ugly brother, slapped him on the back in approval. Pointing to the horses they had just brought in, he shouted to him threateningly, "You get these paints out of sight and keep your mouth shut." Then he jabbed his spurs into his horse as the robbers sped away.



They Made Short Work of the Hold-up

Little Casino shuddered. He was left all alone with the robbers' horses. He began to sense that the men he had joined were mixed up in some nasty business. He knew that he dare not disobey them. They would probably take his life if he tried to. So he tied all the pinto ponies to the lead rope and started off to the canyon with them.

Tad and Tim McPherson watched as their spotted horse gang streaked in different directions across the country. They had arranged for a meeting later. The first thing was to separate and fool the sheriff's men who were bound to be out after them very soon.

The McPhersons were shrewd. They knew the passengers of the stage coach they had held up, would swear the outlaws were on



Headed for Mountain Fastnesses

pinto ponies. Their new horses would fool them. Also, they would make themselves seen quickly so that people would not suspect them. This was not the first of their crimes. In fact, the whole country was aroused over their terrible deeds. Everywhere they went sheets were posted offering a reward for their capture. Tad and Tim McPherson spat at them whenever they passed one. They were always worded the same:

\$5,000 reward offered for the capture of any of the members of the Paint Horse Gang.

The reward posters were signed by Sheriff Judell and Colonel Charles Ormsby, Chairman of the Vigilantes Committee.



They Changed Their Horses and Sped On

CHAPTER II

A TELEGRAM FOR TOM MIX

One desperate deed followed another; each worse than the one before.

A pack train of mules carrying gold ore over the mountains was set upon by the Paint Riders, who came plunging down the hill surrounding the three guards before they had a chance to fire more than a few shots. A desperate fight followed. The guards fought bravely, but soon the mule train, with its gold treasure, was being herded up a secret pass. The Paint Horse Gang was carrying its wounded away.

The telegraph instruments buzzed out the news of the latest hold up.



The Mule Train Was Herded up a Secret Pass

In the State House at Phoenix, Arizona, the operator was catching the message of the hold-up over wire in dots and dashes.

The Governor read the telegram and was incensed. His hand banged the table. They had tried everything to catch the gang. The best men of the state had pitted their brains against them. Many had fallen before the gun-fire of the desperadoes. There was one man the Governor knew of who might be able to handle the case. He had been one of the best United States Marshalls the state had ever known. His life had been so strenuous and he had taken so many daring chances that he had earned a rest. He had settled down on a little ranch and had begun to enjoy a peaceful life. The Governor did not want to disturb him.



He Had Taken Many Desperadoes

But the situation was growing more desperate every day and the Governor knew that Tom would gladly offer his services for the people.

"Take this telegram to Tom Mix," he said to his secretary.

"Let's see, let us send it in care of the sheriff of Silver City. Here is the wire:

Dear Tom, when you get this drop everything and get after that Paint Horse Gang down there. Advise you get in touch with Col. Ormsby, head of the Vigilantes in Silver City . . . He may be of considerable help to you. Kindest regards

Wollcott."

Back at Silver City there was great confusion in the streets. The latest work of the desper-



Settled Down as a Rancher

adoes had somewhat terrified the people.

The stage line had offices in the Silver City hotel. Colonel Ormsby, Chairman of the Vigilantes, was also superintendent of the line. Little Casino had come in from the hills to see him.

"Colonel," he pleaded, "I did not bargain for the kind of stuff that is being pulled on these jobs I want to get out of it."

Just as Colonel Ormsby was about to say something there was a knock on the door and Sheriff Judell poked his head in.

"Can I see you a minute?" he asked.

They motioned Little Casino outside. Suddenly Little Casino had an idea that the sheriff was in league with the Colonel. And he suspected that the Colonel did not seem to care about the crimes the outlaws were committing.



He Came Upon Them during a Hold-up

Sheriff Judell spoke in direct fashion.

"I got a telegram for Tom Mix, and I don't know what to do about it."

Ormsby hesitated a minute and then with a paper knife carefully slit the envelope open at the badly pasted part of the flap. He read the Governor's telegram to Tom Mix.

"Who is he?" asked Ormsby. "A professional killer?"

"Oh no," Sheriff Judell shook his head. "He is a rancher up near the Capitol."

"Well," snickered Ormsby, "I guess we won't worry about him."

Just then Little Casino's sister, Norma, came dashing into the office very angry.

"Some more horses were stolen out of my corral this morning! Why don't you do some-



He Was a Match for These Desperadoes

thing about these outlaws?" she exclaimed.

"Things are being done, Norma," the Colonel assured her. "I have been in touch with the Governor and he is sending a man here."

"Fifty men couldn't clean out that bunch of Paint Horse Riders," Casino's sister shouted.

Little Casino was furious. He was about to say something when the sheriff stopped him.

"Don't you get all het up too," he warned. "We will get your sister's horses back."

The Colonel shot the sheriff a warning glance. Judell realized he said too much.

"That is," he explained, "the Governor is sending a man here. He may be able to do it—only he may not be here very long."

But Tom Mix was to put in an appearance sooner than anybody had expected.



It Was a Strange Cavalcade

At that very moment a strange cavalcade of horsemen came down the mountain trail.

As they approached, the odd appearance of the first rider struck one. He was leaning forward in the saddle, tied and handcuffed. The second man in line was also tied.

The next horse dragged a strange litter on which lay a wounded man, a crude bandage wrapped around his head.

There followed two other horses tied together. Between them was a crude, improvised stretcher on which lay another wounded man.

As they came down the pass the two leading men looked back with murderous hatred toward the fifth rider who was forcing them on.

The man was Tom Mix! He sat in his saddle superbly erect. Tony, Junior, his beautiful



A Wounded Man Was on the Litter

horse, was flecked with foam and road dust.

In fact, Tom Mix had been hungry and sleepy for the four days past. His face was caked with dust and dry sweat. He was well armed. Two six shooters were in his belt and a Winchester in a scabbard. Across the saddle hung two sacks bulging with revolvers, evidently the loot of his foray among the outlaws.

He had followed the trail of the bandits and had come upon them as they gathered around a stage coach they had robbed. His unconquerable spirit had done the rest.

As Tom Mix came down the street, Colonel Ormsby was having another surprise. The two McPherson gangsters walked into his office.

"There's a guy riding in with the four boys you sent after them Indian ponies," yelled Tad.



"I Told You Never To Come to My Office"

Colonel Ormsby was afraid that he would be seen with the men.

"I told you never to come to my office," he warned them. "Here, get out of here quickly, and don't let anyone see you."

There was a great hubbub outside. Sheriff Judell ran to the door of his office to see what was going on. People were shouting questions at each other in the street.

"Maybe they're from the Paint Horse gang?"

When they spied the sheriff they shouted to him, "There's real jailbait for you! Don't let those birds get away!"

Sheriff Judell walked gingerly toward Mix. "What have you got here?" he asked him. "Horse thieves," answered Tom Mix, "from



A Crowd Gathered about Him

out beyond the Red River Reservation."

The sheriff tried to conceal his surprise.

"Red River—that's a long way from here," he said. Turning to some of his helpers, he ordered, "Here, get these fellows untied. Some of you take those wounded men off the stretchers and get Doc Wilson."

Little Casino was watching in the crowd.

Tad and Tim McPherson shoved their way to the front to hear what was going on.

Some of the town gamblers were making bets. Lucky Dawson said, "Bet you five to one there ain't one of those two fellows still in jail two hours after sundown." He had no takers.

By this time the wounded men were being carefully taken into jail. The others were pushed in after them.



Before the Door of the Sheriff's Office

Tom Mix dismounted from Tony, Jr. He unslung the basket containing the rifles and carried them into Sheriff Judell's of ice. Judell eyed him curiously. He wondered whether he was the man for whom the telegram was intended. Being in league with Colonel Ormsby and the Paint Horse Gang, he realized that he would have to be very cautious with the stranger.

"I suppose you will want a receipt for these fellows?" the sheriff asked. Tom nodded.

The sheriff wanted information. "Got any credentials?" he asked.

For reply Tom reached down into his breast pocket and pulled out a letter stamped with the authorization of Governor Wollcott. Sheriff Judell caught his breath. He knew now he would have to be mighty careful.



"There's Real Jailbait for You."

"Did you catch them horse thieves all by yourself?" he asked, not without admiration.

Tom just nodded.

"I got a telegram here for you," the sheriff said as he went to his desk and got the Governor's message. "It is from the Governor."

Tom eyed him suspiciously. He looked at the envelope of the telegram, which bore no imprint from the Governor.

Tom repeated, "From the Governor?" And then with a glint in his eye he added, "What did the Governor say?"

The sheriff was caught in his own trap. He fidgeted uneasily. Luckily Colonel Ormsby came into the room at that moment. The sheriff hurried to introduce the two men.

Tom merely nodded and proceeded to open



The Men Were Taken into the Jail

his telegram. While he was reading this, Judell thought it would be well to show Colonel Ormsby Tom Mix's letter from the Governor.

The doctor had come to take care of the wounded men. Judell and Ormsby made this their excuse to get out to see them. Muttering an apology they rushed out to the cells.

"What is the matter with you fellows, anyway? You let one man scare the whole bunch, eh? One man to capture five. What a fine outfit you are!" Ormsby growled to one man.

"One man," exclaimed the outlaw. "Why, the fellow is as good as fifty men."

Colonel Ormsby sneered.

"Think so! All right, just wait and see. And keep a sharp lookout, too. Don't forget that!"

Tom Mix stood by twirling a gun around



Lucky Dawson Wanted To Bet

his little finger when the sheriff returned.

"Now, Mr. Mix," said the Colonel, "Come on over to the hotel, and we will fix you up." And then, as an afterthought, he added, "What about all those guns you brought in? You better leave them here until the morning."

The sheriff had come in, and he signalled to him as he continued talking to Tom.

"The sheriff will take care of them for you."

"Oh, yes," Judell assured him. "I will lock them all up and bring that receipt to the hotel."

Mix hesitated a minute, then agreed.

"They cost me three nights' sleep already. You had better keep a close watch on them," he called back as they left to go to the hotel.

When he had disappeared, the sheriff got to work, untying the bags, and lifting out the guns.



"What Did the Governor Say?"

CHAPTER III

LUCKY DAWSON

Tom Mix, as was his custom, proceeded to put Tony, Jr. to bed before he himself got any rest. He led his beautiful horse to the stables.

The hotel owner and Ormsby went, too.

They watched him stroke Tony Jr. affectionately as he led him into the stall.

"You look pretty tired, Tony, Jr." Tom told his horse. "You had better lie down."

Miller, the hotel owner, laughed.

"Do you always put him to bed yourself?"

"Sometimes he puts me to bed," said Tom.

"That is certainly a fine, intelligent horse you have," Colonel Ormsby cut in.



Tom Left the Weapons in the Sheriff's Office

"I could not do much without him," Tom laughed.

Then, pointing to a beautiful pinto pony in a stall near by he said, "There's another beautiful horse."

"That is mine," Colonel Ormsby said, looking at Tom suspiciously.

"You don't happen to be one of the Paint Horse Gang, do you, Colonel?" joked Tom.

He watched Ormsby's eyes, and saw a flash of fear in them as the Colonel answered him.

"Looks like it, doesn't it," he said. "But no! It happens I am a great fancier of pintos."

Tom nodded his head knowingly, glancing back at the powerful paint horse as they turned to leave the stables.

Just then there was a splintering of glass, and



Tom Took Tony Jr. to the Stables

the whine of a bullet. It sizzled past Tom's head and hit the wood with a bang.

In a flash Tom whirled around, a gun in each hand, racing for the rear door in the direction from which the sound of the shot had come.

Just as he did so, Tim and Tad McPherson jumped for a hiding place, while Colonel Ormsby tried to throw Mix off the track. He knew full well what the McPhersons had been up to. He, too, was sorry they had missed.

He slapped Tom on the back.

"Well, why worry! You were lucky! It must have been a stray bullet. Maybe somebody was drunk, and celebrating perhaps!"

Mix was nobody's fool. He smiled at Ormsby and said, "Well, maybe you are right."

He slowly put his guns away and turned



"Sometimes He Puts Me to Bed," Said Tom

back toward the barn. His ears were alert, however, to catch the slightest sound.

Tom Mix was dead tired when he reached the hotel room. However he could not rest until he had removed the dust and grime from his body. Joe, the porter, brought towels and soap.

In this old fashioned frontier town, the hotel could not boast of modern plumbing.

Joe lugged in an old fashioned wooden tub, and began to fill this with the pails of steaming water he carried in.

"Colonel Ormsby ordered me to make you as comfortable as possible, so that you should have a good sleep," said Joe when the tub was filled. Then he left the room.

In the sheriff's office, something very strange was happening. The rifles Tom had captured



Joe Was Filling the Tub with Water

were lying on the table near the door. Slowly the latch turned upward. A hand slipped through the opening. Then a man's face was seen. It was one of the desperadoes Mix had brought in. He grabbed a gun and disappeared.

He was followed by one after another of the prisoners.

The four men sneaked around an alleyway and crept toward waiting horses tethered at a post. In a jiffy they were untied.

The most badly wounded man was lifted into the saddle, and strapped there. The others mounted easily. Soon the four horses were galloping over the mountain trail. Nothing but a streak of dust remained behind them.

Tom slept soundly. He needed this rest badly. It was the first he had had in a long time.



Horses Were Waiting for Them

The sound of tinkling music from the dance hall across the street came faintly through the windows. From the saloon below came the noise of the merrymakers and the gamblers.

Suddenly a pistol shot split the air, followed by the bark of a second shot.

Like a flash Tom had leaped out of bed and grabbed his ammunition belt, yanked a gun from its holster, holding it in front of him, poised for action, as he backed toward the bed.

There was another shot. The water pitcher and bowl crashed on the table.

Now Tom knew the shots were coming from the room below. Without taking time to think, he jammed on a shirt, his hat and boots. He strapped his gun belt around his waist, and made a leap for one of the windows. He was



Galloping over the Mountain Trail

out on the balcony now, creeping gingerly along the side of the building.

When he got to the front of the building he climbed over the rail, and slid down the pillar.

In his excitement Tom had forgotten to put on his pants. Face to face with danger, he was totally unaware of his odd appearance as he smashed his way through the crowd in front of the hotel, heading for the gambling room directly under his bedroom.

As he rushed into the room, pushing men aside to clear the way, a strange sight met his eyes. A drunken man was on a table, a gun in his hand, taking wild shots at the ceiling. The men around him were egging him on jokingly.

"What are you trying to do?" he challenged the man on the table.



Tom and Lucky Dawson

"I'll show you," retorted the man whose name was Lucky. "Fill your hand, cowboy!" And he levelled his gun at Tom and pulled the trigger. But the gun was empty!

Tom's gun was already aimed at the man. His finger was just about to press on the trigger, he realized the condition of the man on the table. He let his gun drop, and fired downward to scare him, but the man on the table raised his second gun.

Tom's arm whipped up again. His pistol cracked—there was the sound of splintering wood—a leg of the table doubled up, and Lucky, surprised, went sliding to the floor.

"Give him both barrels, Lucky," shouted one of the sheriff's henchmen.

In a flash Tom knew that they were using



The Girl Burst into a Merry Laugh

this innocent man to wreak vengeance on him.

Lucky lurched toward him. In a split second Tom was right into him, gun jammed into his stomach, his hand whipping the other's gun into the air.

Tom was looking square into Lucky's eyes. He knew that the wild shouts of the men might make him risk anything.

"Put up that gun," he commanded. "How do you expect me to sleep with you shooting the floor out from under me?"

"Shoot it out! Shoot it out!" the desperadoes were yelling, but Lucky understood the glint in Tom's eyes.

"No, no! He is a friend of mine!" he said.

As his eyes fell, he glimpsed Tom's shirt tails hanging over bare legs, and he started to laugh.



Tom Was Embarrassed

Tom looked down, and for the first time realized his odd appearance. He bolted for the door, and raced across the lobby toward the stairway to get to his room, and he ran right into a pretty girl—none other than Norma Laird, Little Casino's sister.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," he cried, jamming his pistols into the holsters, and trying to cover himself up at the same time.

The girl, frightened at first, now stared at Tom, and realizing his predicament, burst into a wild laugh as Tom sped away.

Oddly enough, he could not forget the girl he had run into so unceremoniously. There was something about her face and merry laugh that lingered in his memory.



Tom Suspected Colonel Ormsby

CHAPTER IV

TONY IS STOLEN!

There was plenty of excitement in the hotel stable the next morning. Lucky Dawson, the drunken gambler of the night before, was very sober now. He was pacing up and down the stable with Miller, the hotel proprietor, angrily berating him. Someone had stolen his horse.

"I'll skin them skunks alive when I get my hands on 'em. What do they mean, anyway, taking my buck horse. Some more dirty work of that Paint Horse Gang, I'll bet!"

Colonel Ormsby walked into the stable.
"What happened, Miller?" he asked.
"Some one pretty nearly cleaned out my



"It's Funny They Didn't Take My Horse."

stable last night," the hotel man answered him.
"All except your pinto and a couple more."

"Hmm," said Ormsby, and he made motions
as if looking for clues around the place.

In the sheriff's office Judell was showing
Tom Mix the empty cells and trying to explain.

"When I came down this morning they were
all gone," he blabbered.

Tom had already turned and was making his
way toward the stables. He was surprised to
find more commotion there.

"It's funny they did not take my horse,"
Colonel Ormsby said.

Lucky recognized Tom as he drew near.

"My name is Lucky Dawson," he told him
shaking hands. "I am sorry about last night."

"That is all right," said Tom. "What's up?"



"Someone Has Stolen a Lot of Horses."

"Someone has stolen my horse. Someone has stolen a lot of horses here."

Colonel Ormsby tried to cut in. "Good morning, Mr. Mix."

But Tom paid no attention to him. He was hurrying to Tony Jr.'s stall. It was empty!

Tom clenched his fists. He gritted his teeth. Fire flashed from his eyes, as they narrowed to tiny slits.

He turned to Miller and the Colonel.

"Can I get another horse right away?"

Colonel Ormsby interrupted. "Wait a minute, Miller. Saddle my horse for Mr. Mix."

Tom, surprised, looked at the Colonel.

"You'll need a good horse if you are going after that gang," explained Ormsby.

"Thanks," muttered Tom. "So you think it



"Say, Mister, I Have a Hunch."

was some of those Paint Horse riders?"

"Certain of it," answered the Colonel, "And I am going to get a posse of vigilantes out as soon as I can." he went out hastily.

Lucky Dawson sidled up to Tom. Their eyes met. Somehow Tom saw in this man one whom he instinctively trusted.

"Does Ormsby always ride a paint horse?"

Lucky looked at him closely for several seconds. he seemed to understand.

"Say, Mister, I have a hunch. I think if you will trust me I can take you pretty close to where we will find those horses."

"You're on, Lucky. Get another horse right away."

Soon both of them were racing over the hills toward the secret spot Lucky had in mind.



"That Fellow Is as Good as Fifty When He Gets Started."

CHAPTER V

LITTLE CASINO'S SISTER

It was early dusk when Norma returned to the Laird ranch.

The faithful Jose met her at the gate and helped her off the ranch wagon.

"I didn't expect you back this evening," he told her. "Little Casino said you would be in town overnight."

"I got through earlier than I expected," explained Norma. "I was glad to come home."

The sound of approaching hoof beats was heard up the road.

Jose squinted his eyes, and peered in their direction.



"You Met Tom Mix, Didn't You?"

"It is Colonel Ormsby's horse," he told Norma. "But a stranger's in the saddle."

Lucky made a curious sight on horseback. He was still wearing his gambling clothes. A high hat and a black frock coat did look funny for a riding outfit!

The men drew rein in front of Norma. She recognized Lucky at once.

"Hello there," she cried in welcome. "What are you doing so far away from a poker table?"

Lucky was having trouble dismounting.

"I am looking for the galoots that stole my horse."

Norma laughed. "Well, you don't expect to find them on this ranch, do you?"

"Oh, no," said Lucky. "We stopped here thinking you might invite us to supper."



It Was a Grand Feast, Indeed

In the meantime, Tom Mix had been beam-ing at the girl. She seemed to be ignoring him purposely, he thought. He wondered why he liked her so well. After all, he had seen her for only a few brief seconds, and yet, even right now he felt very much embarrassed and ill at ease in her presence. His heart was pounding.

"You met Tom Mix, didn't you?" Lucky grinned.

Jose took the horses, and Norma and the two men went into the house for supper.

Lucky punched Tom and said, "I'll bet you're going to get the best meal you've ever eaten."

Tom was hungry, but he was not thinking of the meal. His eyes were following Norma everywhere. He admired her tremendously.

It was a grand feast indeed.



A Two-fisted Cake Eater

Even Maria, the serving maid, seemed to sense that Norma was unduly excited. She suspected that Norma liked this stranger too well.

Lucky was having a good time, too. Tom had one piece of cake in one hand, and Norma was already offering him another.

"You are the first two fisted cake eater I have ever seen, Tom," giggled Lucky. "If you keep this up, you will soon be riding side-saddle."

Norma blushed.

But Tom was not paying any attention to Lucky. Suddenly he became serious.

"Do you run many cattle here?" he asked.

"Not many," she replied. "We handle horses mostly."

"That is what I thought when I rode in,"



Tom's Lariat Slipped over His Shoulders

said Tom. "I saw the bronk-breaking corral over in the canyon."

"I have horses waiting over there for someone to work on right now," said Norma.

"Well, why don't you keep Little Casino home more? If he would stay here maybe he would get the work done," said Lucky.

Norma turned to Tom. "He means my brother Berny."

Suddenly Tom motioned her to be silent. His ears were strained to a faint sound which came through the windows. On the alert he got up and walked toward the door.

Out of the distance came the soft sound of horses' hoofs. Then from far away a whinny.

Tom started back in surprise.

"That is my horse!" he cried.



Tom and Tony Jr.

Tom reached for his hat, yanked a lariat loose from the saddle which was on the floor near the door and started forward.

"You see, my hunch was right, wasn't it?"
Lucky called as he ran to join Tom.

Norma, standing in the doorway, apprehensive of hidden danger, saw Tom and Lucky running toward the corral.

Another whinny came,—very much louder this time. Tom turned in its direction and started to loop his lariat. Horses were plunging into the corral. Tom got a glimpse of Tony, Jr. A strange rider was crouched in the saddle.

Tom ran toward them, swinging his rope high in the air. It circled over the rider, and slipped over his shoulder, catching him by surprise. Tom yanked hard on the lariat, bringing



His Own Horse Again

the rider to earth with a resounding smack.

But the rider was quick, too. As he fell, he reached for his gun, and wriggled one arm free from the rope. He fired one shot in Tom's direction. It went wild.

Tom was already running down his rope, drawing it in as he ran. Just as the rider was about to fire again, Tom gave the rope a twist, which caught the man's wrist tight, and sent the gun hurtling into the air. In another second Tom was upon him. He grabbed the man by the shirt front and lifted him bodily into the air.

Now a fusillade of shots was coming from the corral. Lucky's gun was working, too. His plug hat had been shot from his head. With a yell of rage, he charged toward his foes. His



Tom Took His Prisoner to the House

gun cracked. One of the riders slumped in the saddle.

Tom's gun was flaming again. Two of the remaining riders decided to make their getaway, and galloped into the blackness of the road ahead.

Lucky was shouting happily, "I've found my horse! I've found my horse!"

Tom was already bringing his prisoner toward the house. Norma now came running up.

"Brother Berny!" she cried as she recognized Little Casino.

Tom stopped sharply. He saw her look of astonishment. What was her brother doing mixed up in business like this, he thought to himself. Was she in the gang, too? But Norma's next words made him sure that could not be.



"Brother Berny!" She Gasped

"Where did you get those horses?" she demanded, accusingly.

"Well . . . I . . . I . . . did not steal them," he stuttered. "I found them."

"Where?" pressed Norma as Tom took in the whole situation.

"Where? Why . . . down in . . . Guadalupe Canyon. We thought they were strays . . . so we brought them in to hold them here."

Tom was sorry for Norma. He did not want to make her suffer any more.

"He is probably telling the truth," he lied. "The thieves must have run into one of Ormsby's posses, and probably turned the horses loose."

"Yeah," agreed Little Casino.



Tom and His Horse Were as One

CHAPTER VI

ON THE TRAIL OF THE BANDITS

The next morning Tom Mix had a conference with Colonel Ormsby and the sheriff. Both of these men looked very much worried. Tom had told them about Little Casino, and the affair of the night before, mainly to see what reaction it had on them. Tom deliberately acted as if he did not suspect Little Casino of being connected with the outlaws.

"You say Little Casino said he found the horses running loose, eh?" Colonel Ormsby asked Mix.

Try as he might, the Colonel could not hide his deep anxiety.



News of Another Robbery

"That is what he said," Tom answered.

"Didn't he say anything else?" pressed the Colonel. "Didn't he say where he found them?"

"I believe he did," Tom drawled innocently, "but I did not pay much attention to what he said. He did not really know."

Then, eyes peering sharply at the Colonel and Judell, he added, "You don't suspect Little Casino in any way, do you?"

"Oh, no," the Colonel answered, fidgeting uneasily. "That boy is all right."

Just then shots were fired in the street below. A disheveled rider raced down the street.

"The stage coach has been held up again," he cried, as people ran from all directions.

Tom hurried down to the crowd with the Colonel and the Sheriff. He watched them as



Tom Hid behind Some Brush and Waited

they asked questions one after the other.

"Two miles this side of Laird's ranch," said the rider. "I was driving the stage along at a good clip when a gang of men on pinto ponies surrounded us."

"Anybody shot?" asked the Colonel.

"No, but there was a cattle buyer from up North carrying \$5,000 in gold, and they got away with that."

Ormsby put on an air of real concern.

"That man will sue the company, sure as shooting." He turned to Judell. "Get as many of the boys together as you can."

The Sheriff hurried away to round them up.

Tom was eyeing the Colonel very carefully.

"By the way, did you ask him which way the ponies were headed?"



At the Scene of the Robbery

Ormsby was confused, but caught himself quickly. "Probably down the Dona Pass. That is the easiest and quickest short cut they could make on a get away."

Tom hurried to the hitching post where he untied Tony Jr.

The Colonel wondered what he was going to do, and rushed over to him.

"Aren't you going to wait for us?" he asked.

"No," yelled Tom, as he spurred his horse. "It does not take long for a fresh trail to get covered."

"That is true," yelled Ormsby. "Keep going straight west to the first forks—then take the left hand road—we will be right behind you."

Tom dashed through the town and was away up the mountain pass. After he had gone a



Suddenly the Trail Stopped

good distance he came to a fork in the road. He got behind some bushes where he would not be seen, and watched carefully.

Soon Ormsby and Judell, leading a posse of vigilantes, came tearing down the road. Tom watched them as they reached the fork. They took the left hand turn and thundered away.

Tom started again and took the right hand road. In a little while he saw the stage coach in the distance. He drew rein as he came alongside and dismounted to examine the ground carefully. Everyone had already left the scene. He looked to see if he was being watched, but there was not a person in sight. He went over every foot of the ground.

Then luck rewarded him. On the earth lying beside a torn piece of paper he found a boot



Trying To Find the Lost Trail

heel. He picked it up and studied it carefully, and then put it into his pocket. Then he picked up the tracks of the highway men. He mounted Tony, Jr. and soon was galloping down the trail.

"Looks like somebody changed horses here, Tony, Jr." he told his pal where the tracks stopped.

As a matter of fact, he had reached the point where Little Casino had changed the pinto horses for the others. Tom walked around studying his tracks. He found some of them scattering in three directions, and then he found a group heading off toward one spot.

Tom confided in his horse again.

"Whoever handled those horses felt safe," he whispered. "Four horses walking, but the rest were in a hurry!"



He Could See Down into the Secret Valley

And then, his mind made up, he added, "Guess we will follow the fellow we can catch the quickest."

Far ahead Little Casino was riding and steering five of the paint horses to the secret hiding place. Finally he dismounted and going behind some bushes drew out some gunny sacks. He proceeded to tie canvas strips around and under the horses' hoofs. Soon all of the hoofs were properly covered.

Then Little Casino mounted again and led the horses along the rocky formation toward the tunnel.

When he emerged on the other side he came upon a corral. A little tent was set up in front of which two wranglers were playing cards. The sound of the horses' hoofs attracted their



He Followed Little Casino at a Distance

attention. They jumped up, grabbed their guns, on the chance that an unwelcome stranger might have stumbled on the path. But they recognized Little Casino and waved to him.

Tom drew a spy glass from the saddle pocket, and trained it on the rider.

"Little Casino!" he gasped, as he recognized the man.

Tom decided to play a waiting game. Why get the small fry of the gang? It was the leaders that he wanted to tackle.

Later in the day, he trailed Little Casino and the band of horses to Twin Butte Ranch. This was where the McPherson brothers lived. It was a run down place, and the desperado brothers did not take much trouble to keep it neat.

As Tom rode down the road toward the



"Hand Over Your Gun!"

house a dog set up an incessant barking. Tom had his eye on the house. He saw the two McPhersons come to the door. One of them hurled a stick at the dog, and the barking turned to yelping, and then stopped altogether.

The men now disappeared in the house, but Tom knew he was being watched, and moved gingerly forward.

He stopped beside the corral and ran his hand over the backs of some of the horses. They were foam flecked and still sweaty. No doubt this was the headquarters of the gang.

Tom rode right up to the porch and dismounted, leaving Tony, Jr. handily near.

“Anybody home?” he shouted as if he had not seen the McPhersons. Now the two outlaw brothers came to the door again. Tad Mc-



The Surrender

Pherson had his hands on his guns. Tim was behind him, holding a rifle.

"Hello," Tom greeted them. "My name is Mix. Colonel Ormsby sent me over here."

"Ormsby sent you," said Tad in surprise.

They were at a loss to figure this out.

"Yes, there has been a stage coach hold up. I am trailing the outlaws. Ormsby is leading a posse over toward Dona Pass. He told me to go to the Jake Bixby Ranch."

Mix made the false explanation with an innocent look on his face, watching the brothers carefully as he did so. He saw them taken in by his explanation.

The McPhersons were now at ease. The stranger was evidently harmless. He could not even follow a trail, they thought.



Citizens Fled as the Gang Entered Town

Tom wanted to draw the two brothers out on the porch and manage to get into the cabin to see what it looked like, and especially to see if Little Casino were there. He motioned them over to the edge of the porch, pointing over the hills.

"Is there any way I can get over there without back tracking?"

His ruse worked. The two men came toward him and pointed the direction. Tom thanked them, and walking toward the door said, "Say, can I get a drink of water? Is the bucket inside?" He did not even wait for a reply, but stepped into the house.

Tom was a little surprised to see a man sitting at the rough table. The fellow had a weasel face, and looked startled as Tom entered. His



The Desperadoes Were Shooting Wildly

hand reached for a rifle between his knees. Tom grabbed the water pail, saying, "How are you?" to the man as he did so. As he got himself a dipper full of water and started to swallow, he glanced around the room. He saw a door at the far side. He noticed it was a trifle open. Then the slit widened.

"You boys must have been riding some yourselves this morning, weren't you?" asked Tom.

The man at the table dropped his fork. As it clattered to the floor Tom's eye followed it. Something made him look at the man's boot. It was without a heel! Tom felt in his pocket. There was the heel he picked up at the stage coach. He began to be sure that he had found the right place!

Now the door opened a little wider. The



Tom Leaped Back inside the Jail

muzzle of a gun stuck through and aimed right at Tom. He knew he was up against it. Both the McPherson boys had their hands on their guns.

Tom would not show that he was the least bit excited. The only thing to do was to back out—if he could.

“Guess I’ll be going now,” he said, throwing the dipper into the water bucket and spilling some. There was a sizzling noise from the stove. The coffee pot caught Tom’s eye.

“Your coffee is boiling over,” he warned, and he jumped forward as if to stop it. In one grand sweep he caught the pot in one hand, and hurled the scalding liquid square at the man at the table, who was rising, and was just about to point his gun at Tom.

The man screamed in pain. In another flash



Ormsby Winked, a Signal to the Sheriff

Tom had kicked the table over and was behind it, just as a wild shot from the man behind the door pinged over his head.

He had his two guns out now, and both the McPherson boys were covered before they had a chance to recover from their surprise.

"You," he yelled, pointing to Tim McPherson, "unbuckle your belt and let it drop."

The man he had scalded now realized the situation and started to creep forward.

"Up with your hands, you," shouted Tom, "or I'll drill you."

Tim's belt and revolver dropped to the floor with a thud.

"And now, you," shouted Tom to Tad McPherson, "drop your belt, quick! And you at that door, kick it open!"



They Left in a Thunder of Dust and Pistol Shots

Tad McPherson was not taking any chances. He was afraid of this stranger and was not going to let the fellow in the room start the fireworks. His foot lunged toward the door, and it swung open wide. There, inside the bedroom, stood Little Casino—gun in hand, ready to fire.

"Come on out, Little Casino," said Tom.

Little Casino assumed an air of bravado for a moment but soon wilted.

Within a few minutes Tom had them all mounted, and was riding the gang to Silver City.



"A Good Place for You!"

CHAPTER VII

A JAIL BREAK

The news spread quickly that Tom Mix had brought in four prisoners and put them behind the bars in Silver City.

Colonel Ormsby and Sheriff Judell were in a quandary. The crowd outside were yelling "Lynch them! Lynch them!"

Little Casino shivered in his cell with the other outlaws. The noise outside was growing worse every minute. It was Tom Mix who was holding the crowd off. The mob was beginning to throw taunts at Tom and at Colonel Ormsby too.

The crowd continued to storm the jail.



"Sorry, Gentlemen," Said Tom Softly

Ormsby winked to Judell. The Sheriff knew that signal. He crept back to his office, secured some guns, and sneaked back to the cells. Here he handed each of the prisoners a gun and ammunition belt.

"Hang them! Hang them!" the crowd outside were shouting.

"Can they get in here?" Little Casino asked.

"What do you care if they do?" Tad McPherson growled at him. "You can squeal your way out of it."

"I am not a squealer," retorted Little Casino.

"You must be something like that, or Mix would have plugged you when he had the chance yesterday."

The Sheriff now unlocked the cells. The demand for the prisoners became a roar.



She Could Not Believe That Her Brother Was Guilty

Suddenly hoof beats clattered in the street.

"Look out. Look out," the people yelled. "It is the Paint Horse Gang."

The desperadoes were shooting wildly as they tore down the street toward the jail. Citizens fell right and left. Others ran for cover. Colonel Ormsby ran with them.

Tom leaped back inside the jail and slammed the door, jamming the bolt in.

He backed toward the Sheriff's office, reached it, and shut the door behind him, locking it securely.

As he turned, Tad McPherson stood before him, gun levelled, and ordered him to open the door.

Tom now saw that his other three prisoners were also here. There was nothing to do but



Little Casino's Servants Were Loyal to Him

obey, and his prisoners raced to liberty, locking the door as they left.

The Gang had horses waiting for the prisoners. Their appearance was hailed with shouts of welcome. Three of them leaped to the saddles, but Little Casino slunk away, unnoticed.

The Paint Horse Gang were already toward the hills in a thunder of dust and pistol shots.

Tom acted fast. In their excitement the prisoners had failed to take his guns. Now he whipped out one and shot the lock out of the door. As he ran down the empty cell block, Sheriff Judell called to him from a cell.

"Let me out. Those fellows locked me in."

"I think you are right where you belong," laughed Tom, as he dashed for the street.

Little Casino ran around the building to find



The Outlaws Surrounded the House

a horse. Colonel Ormsby saw him, raced after him, and grabbed him. But Little Casino was too quick. He squirmed and was away like a cat with Ormsby firing wildly after him.

As Tom raced for his horse, he ran into Lucky Dawson, and ordered curtly.

"Get a hundred men together. Little Casino is surely heading home. The gang will think he squealed on them, and go after him. We have to get to the Laird Ranch before they do. I am depending on you, Lucky."

Tom was already in the saddle, and Tony, Jr. was galloping toward the Laird Ranch.

Tom guessed right. The Gang had already missed Little Casino, and decided to give him a grand welcome home.

Little Casino dropped from the saddle in



Ormsby's Presence Meant Safety

front of his home. He raced by the servants without speaking to any of them, and dashed into the house, begging Norma to hide him. But Norma insisted on knowing what the trouble was.

Little Casino knew there was no time to be wasted.

"If you have to know, I have been wrangling horses for the Paint Horse Gang."

Norma jumped back aghast, but Colonel Ormsby and his men were already on the porch.

"We want you, Little-Casino," the Colonel cried, as they came through the door.

Norma jumped in front of her brother.

"Don't run, Berny," she warned. "They will shoot."



They Barricaded the Openings

There was a clatter of horses' hoofs outside. Mix hurdled a fence and leaped through the door. The Colonel was dragging Little Casino toward it.

"Sorry, gentlemen," said Tom softly, as his two guns came to hip level, "but that man is my prisoner."

There was a furious look on the Colonel's face as he let the boy go.

The Paint Horse Gang swept down on the house. They did not waste a second getting into action. Soon shots were spattering window glass. They were out to clean up the place. Tom knew they meant plenty of business this time. For a second he regarded Colonel Ormsby.

He knew this man was crooked, and in league with the Gang, and by a trick of fate his pres-



Returning the Outlaw's Fire

ence there meant extra safety for them. The bullets might reach Ormsby as well as any of them, and Ormsby surely would not take any chances, Tom thought.

The thing to do was to barricade every possible opening. Little Casino and two men servants made quick work of this. Another rain of bullets crashed more windows and pinged against walls and door.

Tom pushed Norma back against the wall. When another burst of firing had ceased, Ormsby crept near the shattered window and shouted to the gang outside.

"What do you want?"

"Little Casino," replied Tad McPherson.

Ormsby made a motion as if to give up the boy, but Tom stopped him quickly.



Norma Was Loading for Him

"I guess we will have to fight it out."

Ormsby blanched.

"Make up your mind in there," Tad McPherson growled.

"Wait a minute," yelled Colonel Ormsby. "I think I know some of those men!"

And then, without waiting for Tom to say anything, he ran to the door, pushed the barricade aside, and waved his handkerchief so that the outlaws could see it.

"All right! Walk out," yelled McPherson. Tom had been duped.

The minute that Ormsby got outside, his two henchmen ran after him. They raced for the outlaw line, and were hustled out of sight.

"Barricade that door quickly. Now we are in for it!" Tom yelled. "We have to act mighty



Tom Mix Thought of a Plan

quick. Is there any ammunition in the house?" Mix went into action fast. All the guns were brought together and laid on the floor. Ammunition was placed alongside. Norma and Maria, her maid, were set busy loading the guns. Tom and Little Casino and two servants took their places near the windows and started returning, shot for shot, the fire of the desperadoes.

They had the advantage over the outlaws because their position commanded a full sweep of all approaches to the house.

"We're safe enough here, while the ammunition lasts. We can easily hold them off. Once it gives out, however, we will be at their mercy. If help doesn't arrive here before then we are all through. Those devils outside would not stop at anything!" said Tom.



"Be Ready To Open the Door."

He was silent for a moment.

Suddenly he reached a decision.

"I am going to make a run for it," he cried.
"If I can get away I can get help fast. If not,
the ammunition will give out anyway."

He examined all approaches carefully.
"Looks like I would have the best chance
through that back door. You would only have
to hold them off on one side, letting those two
windows go for a minute," he called to Little
Casino.

"I am going to call my horse," said Tom.

When everybody was set, Mix opened the
door and whistled softly. There was an answer-
ing whinny, and then a scattering of gravel as
Tony, Jr. raced for the door. A fusillade of bul-
lets followed him. Tom swung the door wide



Mix Mounted His Brave Horse

open, and the horse raced into the room, running right up to his master, and rubbing his nose against him.

Tom had decided on a desperate plan. To Norma's surprise he smashed the big round dining table, taking the whole top off it. Then he mounted Tony.

"Hand me the table top," he ordered.

Tom got a secure hold on it and moved it first in front of the horse and then back of the horse in practice.

Norma stood aghast, wondering what dare-devil scheme he was up to.

"Now, when I give you the signal," he called to Little Casino, "swing the door wide. When I get through it, slam it quickly, and barricade it. Keep on firing at intervals through the win-



A Dash for Freedom

dows to make your ammunition last and keep the gang off."

The door swung wide, and with a rush Tom was through it, and Tony, Jr. was racing over the hill. The bullets splintered against the sturdy table top. Tony, Jr. hurdled the fence. Mix swung the table top behind him now, and they were away, without being hit!

Mix headed for the road past the corral he had seen the day before. A quarter of a mile down the road he saw three horsemen. He recognized one immediately. It was Jose, Norma's ranch foreman.

With a yell, he swung over toward them.

"Senor Mix," Jose greeted him. "This is Mr. Nolan and Mr. Jackson, two of our neighbors."

But Tom was not listening. His eyes had seen



He Saw Someone in the Distance

something strange happening at the corral directly ahead. Two Paint Horse wranglers were leading the outlaws' horses toward the corral. Here was their trick again. They were going to change horses!

A wicked idea flashed through Tom's mind as he glimpsed the new situation.

"Let's get those men," he cried.

They spurred their horses forward.

The two wranglers were helpless as lariats swept them off their horses. They were tied and gagged.

"Now," said Tom, "let's go to work quickly. I know their game, and what a grand surprise I am going to give them."

Tom set to work fast with Jose and the two neighbors. Off came the saddles from the paint



Waiting for the Outlaws

horses. Instead of placing them on other tame horses, they brought them over to a second corral in which there were unbroken horses. It was a difficult job to saddle these, but Tom and Jose knew the tricks, and eventually the saddles of the paint horses rested on the backs of the toughest bronks in the county.

Then they took down the bars and moved the bronks into the corral where the other horses formerly were. They had barely finished when Lucky Dawson and his posse came tearing up the road.

"Go get them," yelled Tom. "I will stay here. Give me about twenty-five men. Guess that is all I will need."

Lucky Dawson's men raced toward the house.



The Wranglers Were Quickly Captured

CHAPTER VIII

A GRAND CELEBRATION

Mix gathered his new men about to give them instructions.

"When Dawson attacks the outlaws they are going to rush back here to get their horses."

Then he added. "You men stay under cover behind the trees. Don't worry about their getting away. Just be ready with your loops and guns. You are going to be in for some grand fun!"

The sound of sudden firing and a lot of cries told the men that Lucky had reached the Laird house. Soon there was a sound of curses, and men came running up the road. Straight for the



Defeated and Roped Up

corral they headed, and over the fence they piled. They jumped for the saddles, and then Mix's fireworks started.

Instead of the tame ranch horses they expected to ride, they found themselves on rearing, tearing bronks, and how those horses bucked! Four feet in the air at one time, heads to the sky! Horses side stepping, kicking, biting and the outlaws were somersaulted into the air. Some of them fell on their heads. All of them growled and groaned on the ground. Some of them tried to stand up and stagger away.

"All right, men," yelled Tom. "Take them!" Soon the whole Paint Horse Gang was roped. Tom walked over to Colonel Ormsby.

"Sorry, Colonel," he said. "I have to take you to meet a friend of yours."



"I Must Take You To Meet a Friend of Yours."

"Who?" asked Ormsby as he wiggled in the rope.

"Sheriff Judell," Mix answered dryly.

"Where is he?" asked the Colonel.

"Behind the bars at Silver City," Mix smiled at him, "where you and the McPhersons and this whole gang are going to be within the next half hour. And this time you are not going to get out!"

That night there was a grand celebration at the Laird Ranch. Lucky Dawson was master of ceremonies.

"Looks to me as if you like this stranger very much," Dawson said slyly to Norma.



"You Like This Stranger Very Much."



Remastered by Chris Kalb, cdkalb@mac.com

**TOM
MIX
TERROR
TRAIL**

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